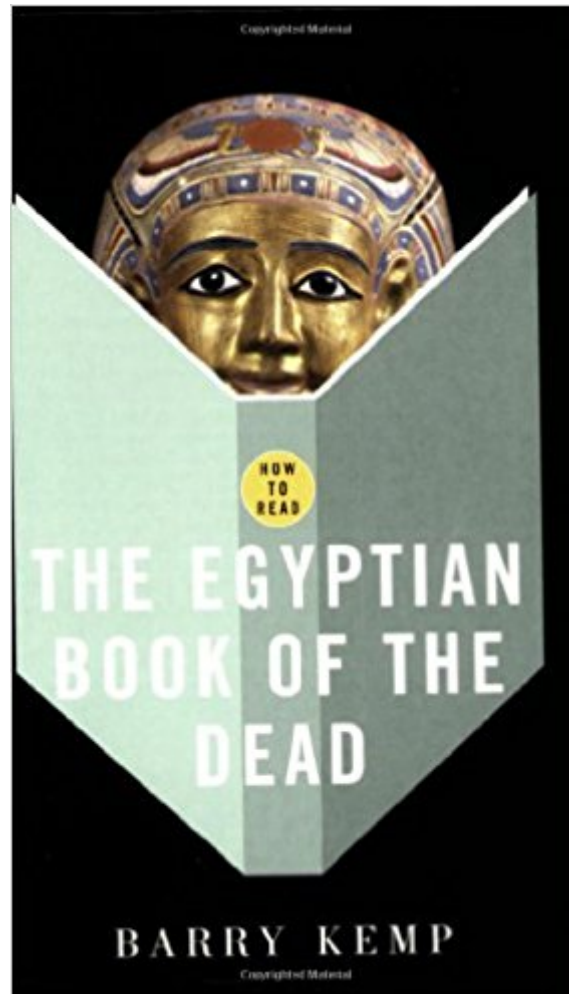




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How To Read The Egyptian Book Of The Dead



Synopsis

The Egyptians created a world of supernatural forces so vivid, powerful and inescapable, that controlling one's destiny within it was a constant preoccupation. In life, supernatural forces manifested themselves through misfortune and illness, and after death were faced for eternity in the Otherworld along with the divine gods that controlled the universe. "The Book of the Dead" empowered the reader to overcome the dangers lurking in the Otherworld and to become one with the gods that governed. Barry Kemp selects a number of spells to explore who and what the Egyptians feared and the kind of assistance that the Book offered them, revealing a relationship between the human individual and the divine quite unlike that found in the major faiths of the modern world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

* 'A capsule key to the ancient Egyptian mind' Dr. Norman Hammond, Archaeology Correspondent, The Times * 'Excellent, unusual and arresting...This is most certainly a book that will challenge and reward' New World * 'A fascinating tour of the most significant hieroglyphs and the people who created them' VeloCity magazine

Barry Kemp is Professor of Egyptology at the University of Cambridge. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and Field Director of The Egypt Exploration Society's archaeological expedition to Tell el-Amarna. He is the author of Ancient Egypt; Anatomy of a Civilization and 100 Hieroglyphs.

This book definitely offered insight and assistance in understanding the spells in the Book of the Dead, and the author does a nice job of trying to fit the spells into the everyday life and world-view of the ancient Egyptian. He seemed to me at times, however, to be a little bit condescending toward his subjects and the period, as if the Egyptian worldview and religion were inferior to our own (not in every respect, surely). Overall, though, I found it a short, helpful companion to my beautiful oversized version of the papyrus of Ani.

Excellent.

At roughly 110 pages, Kemp's book is more of a long pamphlet. But for those interested in understanding the mindset behind the Book of the Dead (or Peret em Heru--Coming Forth by Day), this book will be a welcome addition to the bookshelf. Kemp's writing is clear, enjoyable to read, and at times quite insightful. Kemp had a habit of subtly putting down the ancient Egyptians at times, while demonstrating a degree of respect for them at others. The part that grated most was when Kemp kept calling the ancient Egyptians' religion an invented one, as if the ancients were silly savages whose thoughts had no merit. It was really a matter of tone and how he framed it. This was the one flaw that marred an otherwise wonderful addition to my Egyptology collection.

A slim book -- 100 pages or so -- but filled with solidly researched information. Barry Kemp is a practicing Egyptologist (working in Amarna), as well as a Cambridge University professor and scholar. I appreciate the fact that he gives not only his own carefully thought out opinions but mentions other scientists' opinions as well. He is a good writer, though he has a dense style. It has taken me a while to get through this book, but well worth the effort. There is more information in this small book than in many large books on Ancient Egypt that I have read. I have learned so much about The Book of the Dead from reading it, including the fact that it was never called that by the Ancient Egyptians, but called The Going Forth by Day. Kemp cites and examines many of the spells that make up the work, and the information he conveys along the way is illuminating. This book is well worth adding to your library of books on Ancient Egypt.

I read only a few pages and it is in my garage shelf now. Perhaps I was expecting too much info, but nonetheless, I really did not what to expect

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